Worksheet: Identifying Basic Chord Symbols

by Scott Wilson

Over the years composers have used a variety of ways to notate chord symbols. Regardless of the notation style, all chord symbols must indicate the _________ (i.e. whether a chord is major, minor, dominant, half-diminished or diminished). Listed below are examples of the most common chord notation styles for the five basic seventh chords.

What are 4 possible ways to write the C Major Seventh chord symbol?

What are 4 possible ways to write the C minor seventh chord symbol?

What are 2 possible ways to write the C Dominant Seventh chord symbol?

What are 5 possible ways to write the C Half-Diminished Seventh Chord Symbol?

What are 2 possible ways to write the C diminished seventh chord symbol?

Jazz Gem *: Many music notation software programs now use small uppercase letters to represent lower case letters. For Example: M7 is Major seventh and m7 is minor seventh (both letters look identical, however, one is slightly smaller and it indicates minor). Unfortunately, for us jazz musicians, these new jazz fonts make reading chords symbol a little more difficult. Now, in some case, musicians will also have to look closely at the SIZE of the letter to discern the chord symbols quality.

*** Question (Minus one for each mistake, however, this question is worth a maximum of 2 points): Write out the scale tones of the blues scale using numbers:

___, ____, ____, ____, ____